

REMARKS

Claims 3, 17, 19, 20, 24, 28, 30 and 31 are pending in the application. Claims 3, 20 and 24 are currently rejected. Claims 17, 19, 28, 30 and 31 are allowed. Claims 3, 20 and 24 have been cancelled. In light of the amendments and remarks herein, reconsideration of claims 17, 19, 28, 30 and 31 is respectfully requested.

Amendments to the Claims

While Applicants believe that the previously presented claims are patentable, the claims have nonetheless been amended as follows in order to place the application in condition for allowance of the claims. The Applicants traverse the Examiner's stated basis for rejecting the now-cancelled claims. The amendments are made without prejudice or disclaimer, and Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original scope of the claims as provided prior to the cancellation or amendments, such as through continuation practice.

Claims 3, 20, and 24 are cancelled. No further amendments to the claims have been made.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicants acknowledge and appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 17, 19, 28, 30 and 31 are allowable, and the currently-rejected claims have been cancelled so that the allowed claims can be issued.

Claim Rejections – Nonstatutory Obviousness-Type Double Patenting

Claims 3 and 20 were rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 5 and 6 of U.S. Patent No. 7,223, 270. Claim 24 was rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 6 and 7 of U.S. Patent No. 7,223,281. As noted above, the Applicants disagree with the Examiner's stated basis for rejecting the claims. Applicants maintain that each of the rejected claims contains one or more distinguishing elements and that

each claim is not an obvious variant of the cited claims. Nonetheless, the Applicants have cancelled claims 3, 20 and 24 in order to place this application in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the above-identified patent application has been amended and reconsideration is respectfully requested for all the reasons set forth above. In the event that the Examiner deems that the amendments and remarks do not overcome the stated grounds for rejection or objection, the Applicants kindly request that the Examiner telephone the undersigned representative to discuss any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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